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BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS
AND INTERFERENCES

Application Number: 09/905,580
Filing Date: July 12, 2001
Appellant(s): SIMPSON ET AL.

Jack H. McKinney
For Appellant

EXAMINER'S ANSWER

This is in response to the appeal brief filed 12/21/2007 appealing from the Office action mailed 4/29/2007.

(1) Real Party in Interest

A statement identifying by name the real party in interest is contained in the brief.

(2) Related Appeals and Interferences

The examiner is not aware of any related appeals, interferences, or judicial proceedings which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

(3) Status of Claims

The statement of the status of claims contained in the brief is correct.

(4) Status of Amendments After Final

The appellant's statement of the status of amendments after final rejection contained in the brief is correct.

(5) Summary of Claimed Subject Matter

The summary of claimed subject matter contained in the brief is correct.

(6) Grounds of Rejection to be Reviewed on Appeal

The appellant's statement of the grounds of rejection to be reviewed on appeal is correct.

(7) Claims Appendix

The copy of the appealed claims contained in the Appendix to the brief is correct.

(8) Evidence Relied Upon

6453127	Wood et al	9-2002
6154843	Hart	11-2000
6751657	Zothner	6-2004
6092078	Adolfsson	7-2000

(9) Grounds of Rejection

The following ground(s) of rejection are applicable to the appealed claims:

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

1. Claims 1-3, 11, 12, 15-17, 25, and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wood et al. (U.S. Patent Number 6,453,127), hereinafter referred to as Wood, in view of Hart, Jr. et al. (U.S. Patent Number 6,154,843), hereinafter referred to as Hart.

2. Wood disclosed a method for establishing a user interface to a printer at a remote location where the user interface is downloaded from a web server to the user to allow the user to control the printer. In an analogous art, Hart disclosed a secure remote access computing system that utilizes a custom user interface to allow a user to execute tasks on a secure private network from an unsecured remote computer.

3. Concerning claims 1 and 15, Wood did not explicitly state accessing data that at least indirectly identifies those production options to which the user does not have permission to access. However, Hart's system provides user authorization techniques that allow a user access only to those options to which he has permission and that restrict the user from those options to which he does not have permission. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to modify the system of Wood by adding the ability to access data that at least indirectly identifies those production options to which the user does not have permission to access as provided by Hart. This would make sense because it would allow a higher degree of management and security features in Wood's system. Hart cites the need for more secure remote access Of a device which requires only a minimum number of features and sets out to solve the problem with a customized real-time program with which to access the • device (see column 2, lines 16-27 and 47-59). This motivation also applies to those' dependent claims utilizing the same combination.

4. Also concerning Claims 1 and 15, Wood did not explicitly state that his system could modify the retrieved user interface according to the accessed data so that the interface

provides user accessible controls for selecting only those options for which the user has permission to access. Although his system generates a user interface for the user, he is also not explicit about modifying the interface in this way. However, Hart's system dynamically generates a custom program for the user based on a verification of the user's security privileges. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to modify the system of Wood by adding the ability to check for user permissions and modify the interface accordingly as provided by Hart. Again, this would make sense because it would allow a higher degree of management and security features in Wood's system as discussed above.

5. Some claims will be discussed together. Those claims which are essentially the same except that they set forth the claimed invention as a computer program product are rejected under the same rationale applied to the described claim.

6. Thereby, the combination of Wood and Hart discloses:

- «Claims 1 and 15»

A method for mediating access to production options, comprising: acquiring a user's access request for a production device (Wood, column 2, line 65 through column 3, line 8); accessing data that at least indirectly identifies those production options to which the user does not have permission to access (Wood, column 6, lines 1-8 and Hart, column 5, line 59 through column 6, line 11 and column 11, lines 26-33), each production option corresponding to feature that when implemented affects a manner in which the production device produces a target document (Wood, column 3, lines 54-65); retrieving

a user interface for the production device, the user interface having user accessible controls for selecting production options for the production device (Wood, column 5, lines 3-24 and column 3, lines 54-65); modifying the retrieved user interface according to the accessed data so that the interface provides user accessible controls for selecting only those options for which the user has permission to access (Hart, column 3, lines 3-12 and column 6, lines 12-34); and presenting the user with the modified user interface (Wood, column 5, lines 3-24).

- «Claims 2 and 16»

The method of Claim 1, wherein the act of acquiring comprises intercepting an access request directed to the production device (Wood, column 2, line 65 through column 3, line 8).

- «Claims 3 and 17»

The method of Claim 1, wherein the act of acquiring comprises redirecting the access request (Wood, column 21 line 65 through column 3, line 8).

- «Claims 11 and 25»

The method of Claim 1, wherein the acts of retrieving and modifying are performed on a network device other than the production device (Wood, figure 2, item 30).

- «Claims 12 and 26»

The method of Claim 1 wherein the act of retrieving comprises retrieving the interface in the form of a web page, and the act of presenting comprises presenting the modified web page to a web browser (Wood, column 5, lines 3-24).

Since the combination of Wood and Hart discloses all of the above limitations, claims 1-3, 11, 12, 15-17, 25, and 26 are rejected.

7. Claims 5, 9, 10, 14, 19, 23, 24, 28, 33, and 34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wood in view of Hart, as applied above, further in view of Zothner (U.S. Patent Number 6,751,657).

8. The combination of Wood and Hart disclosed a method for establishing a user interface to a printer at a remote location where the user interface is dynamically generated for allowing the user to control the different options of the device for which he has permission. In an analogous art, Zothner disclosed a business rules manager module that associates business rules with actions in terms of the role of a user in the system.

9. Concerning independent claims 14, 28, 33, and like dependent claims, the combination of Wood and Hart did not explicitly state accessing a user record in order to generate the interface. Although the combination of Wood and Hart does check permissions for a specific user, it is not specific about using user records. However, Zothner's system describes a set of user profiles that help define the role of each user and contain security and permission information for each user. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in

the art at the time of the applicant's invention to modify the combination of Wood and Hart by adding the ability to access a user record as provided by Zothner. This would make sense because it would allow a higher degree of management and security features in the combination of Wood and Hart. Zothner cites the need for this expanded capability in management as being important to the availability and reliability of network systems (see column 4, line 62 through column 5, line 12), two features that are very important to the combination of Wood and Hart for information access and monitoring. This motivation also applies to those dependent claims utilizing the same combination.

10. Thereby, the combination of Wood, Hart, and Zothner discloses:

- «Claims 5 and 19»

The method of Claim 1, wherein the act of accessing comprises obtaining credentials for the user and- locating a user record using the credentials, the user record containing the data that at least indirectly identifies those production options to which the user does not have permission to access (Zothner, column 9, line 64 through column 10, line 8 and Hart, column 5, line 59 through column 6, line 11 and column 11, lines 26-33).

- «Claims 9 and 23»

The method of Claim 1, wherein the interface is a web page containing instructions for displaying controls for selecting production options and wherein the instructions are associated with one or more tags each tag identifying a particular production option, wherein the act of altering comprises identifying the tags for production options to which

the user does not have access and altering the instructions associated with those tags (Zothner, column 19, line 58 through column 20, line 4).

- «Claims 10 and 24»

The method of Claim 1, wherein the act of accessing comprises obtaining credentials for the user and locating a record for the user using the credentials, the record containing the data that at least indirectly identifies those production options to which the user does not have permission to access (Zothner, column 9, line 64 through column 10, line 8 and Hart, column 5, line 59 through column 6, line 11 and column 11, lines 26-33).

- «Claims 14 and 28»

A method for mediating access to production options, comprising: acquiring a user's access request for a production device (Wood, column 2, line 65 through column 3, line 8); retrieving a web page for the production device, the web page having user accessible controls for selecting production options (Wood, column 5, lines 3-24); accessing a record established for the user, the record containing data that at least indirectly identifies those production options to which the user does not have permission to access (Wood, column 6, lines 1-8; Zothner, column 9, line 64 through column 10, line 8; and Hart, column 5, line 59 through column 6, line 11 and column 11, lines 26-33), each production option corresponding to feature that when implemented affects a manner in which the production device produces a target document (Wood, column 3, lines 54-65); and modifying the retrieved web page according to the user's record so that the web page provides user accessible controls for only those options for which the user has permission to access (Hart, column 3, lines 3-12 and column 6, lines 12-34); and presenting the user

with the modified web page so that through the web page the user can cause the production of the target document by the production device in accordance with a selection of one or more of the user accessible controls provided by the user interface (Wood, column 5, lines 3-24 and column 6, lines 18-34).

- «Claim 33»

In a computer network, a system for managing electronic document production, the system comprising: a production server operable to serve to a client an interface having user accessible controls for selecting production options for a target document (Wood, figure 2, item 30 and column 5, lines 3-24), each production option corresponding to a feature that when implemented affects a manner in which a selected production device produces a target document (Wood, column 3, lines 54-65); a permission service operable to retrieve the interface from the production server for the selected production device (Wood, column 5, lines 3-24), access a user's record containing data that at least indirectly identifies those production options to which the user does not have permission to access (Wood, column 6, lines 1-8; Hart, column 5, line 59 through column 6, line 11 and column 11, lines 26-33; and Zothner, column 9, line 64 through column 10, line 8), modify the retrieved interface according to the user's record so that the modified interface has user accessible controls for only those options for which the user has permission to access (Hart, column 5, line 59 through column 6, line 34), and direct to the client the modified interface so that through the interface the user can cause the production of the target document by the selected production device in accordance with a selection of one

or more of the user accessible controls provided by the modified interface (Wood, column 5, lines 3-24).

- «Claim 34»

The system of Claim 33, further comprising a permission engine operable to generate an interface having user accessible controls for managing user records (Zothner, column 9, line 64 through column 10, line 8).

Since the combination of Wood, Hart, and Zothner discloses all of the above limitations, claims 5, 9, 10, 14, 19, 23, 24, 28, 33, and 34 are rejected.

11. Claims 35, 36, and 38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wood in view of Hart, further in view of Zothner, as applied above, further in view of Adolfsson (U.S. Patent Number 6,092,078).

12. The combination of Wood, Hart, and Zothner disclosed a method for establishing a user interface to a printer at a remote location where the user interface is dynamically generated for allowing the user to control the different options of the device for which he has permission. In an analogous art, Adolfsson also disclosed a method for interfacing network peripheral devices with a web browser where the web browser provides the user with a graphical user interface that allows the user to control different options of the peripherals.

13. Concerning independent claim 38, and like dependent claims, the combination of Wood, Hart, and Zothner did not explicitly state using device records for generating the

interface or using a device locator for detecting new devices. However, Adolfsson's system is substantially similar to the combination and does explicitly describe the use of device records for peripherals as well as techniques for locating peripherals new to the system. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to modify the combination of Wood, Hart, and Zothner by adding the ability to use device records for generating the interface and use a device locator for detecting new devices as provided by Adolfsson. This would make sense because it would allow a higher degree of management and security features in the combination of Wood, Hart, and Zothner. Zothner cites the need for this expanded capability in management as being important to the availability and reliability of network systems (see column 4, line 62 through column 5, line 12). This motivation also applies to those dependent claims utilizing the same combination.

14. Thereby, the combination of Wood, Hart, Zothner, and Adolfsson discloses:

- «Claim 35»

The system of Claim 34, further comprising one or more device records, each device record containing data representing the production options offered by the particular production device, and wherein the permission engine is operable to parse the device records to generate the interface for managing the user records (Adolfsson, column 9, line 66 through column 10, line 10 and column 16, lines 44-50).

- «Claim 36»

The system of Claim 35, further comprising: a device locator operable to detect new

production devices; and an update service operable to create a device record for each newly detected production device (Adolfsson, column 16, line 51 through column 17, line 5).

- «Claim 38»

In a computer network, a system for managing electronic document production, the system comprising: a production device (Wood, figure 2, item 15); one or more user records, each user record containing, for each production device, data that at least indirectly identifies those production options to which the user does not have permission to access (Wood, column 6, lines 1-8; Hart, column 5, line 59 through column 6, line 11 and column 11, lines 26-33; and Zothner, column 9, line 64 through column 10, line 8), each production option corresponding to feature that when implemented affects a manner in which the production device produces a target document (Wood, column 3, lines 54-65); a production server in communication with the production device and operable to serve an interface for that production device, the interface having user accessible controls for selecting production options for the production device (Wood, figure 2, item 30 and column 5, lines 3-24); a permission service operable to access the user's record, retrieve the interface from the production server, modify the retrieved interface according to the user's record so that the modified interface has user accessible controls for only those options for which the user has permission to access (Wood, column 5, lines 3-24; Zothner, column 9, line 64 through column 10, line 8; and Hart, column 5, line 59 through column 6, line 34), and to direct to a client the modified interface so that through the modified interface the user can cause the production of the target document by the selected production device in accordance with a selection of one

or more of the user accessible controls provided by the modified interface (Wood, column 5, lines 3-24); one or more device records, each device record containing data representing the production options offered by the production device (Adolfsson, column 9, line 66 through column 10, line 10); a permission engine operable to parse the device records and generate an web page for managing user records (Adolfsson, column 16, lines 44-50 and column 4, lines 21-23 and Zothner, column 9, line 64 through column 10, line 8); a device locator operable to detect new production devices; and an update service operable to create a device record for each newly detected production device (Adolfsson, column 16, line 51 through column 17, line 5). Since the combination of Wood, Hart, Zothner, and Adolfsson discloses all of the above limitations, claims 35, 36, and 38 are rejected.

(10) Response to Argument

Appellant argues that the combination of Wood and Hart does not disclose the features of claim 1 because it fails to disclose "modifying the retrieved user interface according to the accessed data so that the interface provides user accessible controls for selecting only those options for which the user has permission to access." Specifically, Appellant asserts that Hart discloses generating a customized user interface which, in Applicant's view, is different from the claimed limitation. Appellant further asserts that the claimed limitation "implies" additional limitations of identifying and disabling "controls for selecting options for which the user does not have access" which are not expressly recited in any of the claims. Appellant argues that the references do not disclose these implicated limitations. Because Wood and Hart teach the claimed limitations and because Appellant is

arguing limitations not recited in the claims, Appellant's arguments should not be found persuasive.

While Hart does disclose "generating" a user interface, this teaching reads on Appellant's modifying step. Appellant's limitation recites modifying a retrieved user interface to create a new user interface with certain controls accessible to a specific user. That is, a new user interface is generated based on the modification step. Thus, while Appellant attempts to differentiate between modifying a user interface and generating a user interface, there is in fact no functional difference at all since the modifying step in actuality results in generating a user interface.

More importantly, the cited references teach the claimed invention as they are written. Wood teaches retrieving a user interface where the user interface has accessible controls for selecting production options [column 5, lines 3-24]. Wood however failed to disclose modifying the user interface so that the interface provides user accessible controls for selecting only those options for which the user has permission to access. Hart remedies this deficiency with its teaching of generating a custom web page composed of various data and user interface features that are chosen based on a user's access privileges [column 7, lines 46-50]. Hart further elaborates that this generating step comprises "integrating" the data into the custom user interface to create the new user interface [column 10, lines 45-48]. One of ordinary skill in the art would understand from this teaching that there must be an initial user interface into which the data is integrated in order to generate the custom user interface.

Therefore, Hart's generating step reads on Appellant's modifying step because Wood's web page is being modified to integrate custom data and user interface features as

taught by Hart. One of ordinary skill in the art would have relied on Hart for the teaching of integrating custom data and user interface features into Wood's existing web page in order to generate a user interface that provides a "remote computing device 10...all the capability needed to complete the specific task requested by the remote user" [Hart, column 6, lines 51-53].

Appellant attempts to shift the analysis in arguing that "Hart mentions nothing of generating a user interface have [sic] certain functions and then removing or disabling such functions." The claims do not require Wood or Hart to teach this functionality. Appellant admits that such functionality is at best implied from the claim language. However, the claims, as they are currently written, merely require modifying a retrieved user interface according to accessed data so that the interface provides user accessible controls for selecting only those options for which the user has permission to access. The claims do not specify how the user interface is modified. Hart teaches "integrating" or adding custom data and user interface features. This integration functionality reads on Applicant's modifying step as it is currently written.

(ii) Related Proceeding(s) Appendix

No decision rendered by a court or the Board is identified by the examiner in the Related Appeals and Interferences section of this examiner's answer.

Art Unit: 2146

For the above reasons, it is believed that the rejections should be sustained.

Respectfully submitted,

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